

**Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results Program  
(AMIR 2.0 Program)**

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**Development of a Focus, and Strategic Work Plan  
for Business and Professional Women, (BPW)  
in  
Aqaba, Irbid and Zarqa**

Final Report

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## Executive Summary

The National Federation of Business and Professional Women – Jordan (NFBPW) is a voluntary association comprised of member associations in various geographic areas, and affiliated with the International Federation of Business and Professional Women. There are currently four Business and Professional Women Associations (BPWAs) in Jordan; namely, Amman, Irbid, Zarqa, and Aqaba. According to NFBPW, these four organizations fall under the umbrella of the NFBPW and are expected to be the implementing tool for their aims and objectives. However, the Amman association has been operating entirely independent of NFBPW. The BPWA's in Aqaba, Irbid, and Zarqa have been operational for a few years. To date, they have not produced any results, and require significant restructuring in order to be able to operate effectively. The membership is extremely low and there are little or no activities. Although the associations fall under the umbrella of the NFBPW, there has been little coordination amongst the federation and associations.

The purpose of this consultancy is to offer technical assistance to the women's business associations, in order to build a foundation for each BPW in order to have a well-developed vision, mission and program of work. In addition, the strategic planning exercise will provide each separate association with a better measure on how to facilitate a relationship between each other and the NFBPW. This three-day planning seminar was designed for all of the Business and Professional Women's associations. BPW-Amman, however, attended the Dead Sea workshop designed for other business associations and did not have a presence at this seminar. Unfortunately, BPW-Irbid was unable to muster participation.

CIPE modules used the first day to set the stage included: An Overview of Business Associations, Membership Development and Sources of Non-Dues Income. Elements of Marketing, Communications and Public Policy were also included. Emphasis was made repeatedly on how a business association responds first to *member needs* and secondly to the surrounding community and then only through the business lens to create the best economic environment. The importance of Board development and changing leadership was also covered along with how to think creatively about membership categories and dues structures. The consultants and participants talked in depth about non-dues income meaning more than grants and the advantages of building profit into all programs and services. The Board members were informed of the Amman BPW move to change its name, focus and registration of ministry.

A complete introduction to Strategic Planning concepts was followed by a discussion of the NFBPW and its relationship to the locals to solicit Board input for the one-day planning session to follow in a week. A full day was spent refining the group's understanding of Strategic Planning and how it related to their fulfillment of goals. As to the role of the NFBPW it was made clear if they wanted services there had to be a way determined to pay for them.

A great deal was accomplished over the weekend and both groups did well with the new concepts. The results of the sessions will be included in the report of Anis Tarabey, co-facilitator. Evaluations of both facilitators will also be included in Anis' report.

Results of a strategic planning session between the four BPWA's and the NFBPW, guided by a federation study commissioned by AMIR, resulted in a verbal statement of support for the NFBPW by three of the BPW Presidents in attendance, plus a statement of support given to this consultant by the Vice President of the BPW Amman. They also brainstormed a vision, edited the NFBPW mission statement and created eight Strategic Goals that would differentiate the work of the NFBPW from its local member organizations. Expansion of the federation was not listed as one of these Strategic Goals but it should not be discounted.

There is nothing listed per se in the International BPW web pages on mission, goals or programming that indicates the need for successful Jordanian women's business associations to cut their ties with that organization so long as the association's focus is on creating the economic independence of women with the center of their attention on their members and providing them a return on investment. If the penalizing history of the BPW relationship might be alleviated through negotiation and the re-drafting of Bylaws, clear agreements on roles and responsibilities and/or changes in leadership, *as recommended in the federation report*, these steps should be taken and the affiliations – current and future – left up to the involved parties without negative consequences.

A frank appraisal of the damage that has been done to the BPW's at all levels by the in-fighting and leadership struggles was made clear. The meeting's goal of putting the past behind and moving forward with a clear focus for the organization, with attendant strategies, goals and a funding discussion based on self-responsibility and standard international association sustainability practices, were laid out and accepted. However, without the BPW Amman President present, no vows of moving forward could be taken as gospel and the meeting's goal of strategic planning *did* take precedence over remediation. A leader of the NFBPW who heard about what came out of the meeting invited all parties to her home on June 4<sup>th</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

The eight Strategic Goals for the NFBPW are listed in the report below. The mission and vision are included in the co-facilitator's report.

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<sup>1</sup> I have not heard whether that meeting took place and if it did what the results were.

## Three Day Training and Strategic Planning Session for BPW's in Aqaba and Zarqa

### Introduction

Following the diagnostic assessments of the BPW's in Aqaba, Irbid and Zarqa to determine their base level of sophistication as compared to the international norm for business associations, a three day Training and Strategic Planning seminar was held in Petra for all of the local BPW's. As the Amman "club" had already attended the AMIR Strategic Planning seminar at the Dead Sea in March, they declined the invitation and Irbid was unable to muster participation. There were four members from Zarqa and five from Aqaba present for the duration of the workshop, with two additional Board members from Aqaba joining for part of the sessions. The Presidents from both associations were present.

### Day One

The following CIPE modules were presented to the attendees: An Overview of Business Associations, Membership Development and Sources of Non-Dues Income. Elements of Marketing, Communications and Public Policy were also referred to throughout the sessions as both associations claimed that they were taken quite seriously in their respective communities and quite effective in being heard at the local policy-making level, despite the "club" moniker. (They had made it clear in other interviews as well as this one that they felt national lobbying was the work of the NFBPW.)

Throughout the introductory session, comparisons were made between the BPW's and how they have functioned and the standard western, voluntary business association model. Special emphasis was made repeatedly on how a business association responds first to *member needs* and secondly to the surrounding community and then only through the business lens to create the best economic environment. The example of a legal center focus on social cases such as divorce and alimony versus a focus on business legal matters was used to exemplify a business focus in all programs and services.

The Board members were informed of the BPW-Amman's move to change its name, focus and registration of ministry to begin anew beyond the social connotation those labels imply. Enough had already been gleaned from the Diagnostic interviews with the respective Presidents to realize emphasis on Board development and changing leadership, along with a lecture on membership inclusiveness.

Attendees were instructed in how to think creatively about membership categories and dues structures in order to produce more income, the basics of maintaining and retaining members, how to determine the base cost of membership and the practices of both ongoing and concentrated membership acquisition. Also discussed in depth was

non-dues income meaning more than grants, the advantages of building profit into all programs and services *over grants* and how sponsorships and other public relations relationships can mean more income for the association. All ideas were met with interest and questions, though it was obvious that participants had hoped for a “silver bullet,” (ie: a grant from AMIR or elsewhere!) to solve their seed money needs. The agenda was changed slightly the first two days to allow for a complete introduction to Strategic Planning concepts and vocabulary the first day rather than breaking it into two. Leadership points and a discussion of the NFBPW and its relationship to the locals to solicit Board input for the one-day planning session for that organization was postponed to day two.

### Day Two

The entire day on Saturday was spent refining the group’s understanding of Strategic Planning and how it related to their fulfillment of goals, except for the conversation referenced above in the morning. Included in that delivery was a basic course in free enterprise, capitalism and economics as it was explained why AMIR/USAID conducted the programs they did with taxpayer money on behalf of Jordanian business. By this time, the President of the Aqaba club had joined us and her domination of that club’s leadership became obvious: it became much harder to get other Aqaba Board members to state their own opinions or respond to questions once the President had expressed her opinion. When the possibility of a name change or re-registration was brought up for a second time on day two, the Aqaba President insisted it was neither “legal” to change names without International’s consent nor possible to change ministries unless one had become a “political party.”<sup>2</sup> The reverence the Aqaba President is held in by her Board, at least those present, was palpable; she truly has captured their minds and hearts with her tireless deeds on their behalf.

Response on the relationship between the local and the national and international clubs was often punctuated with digressions on how the BPW-Amman *used* to service them, rather than acknowledging that what Amman did in the past is actually the role of the NFBPW and if they still wanted those services there had to be a way determined to pay for them. The BPWA’s outside of Amman seem to get some sense of mass, influence and stability from their connection to a federation. Although at their current size and dues level, in addition to the lack of services from an under-financed National association, the weight of their NFBPW investments are somewhat resented.

Despite the occasional dominance problem, a significant amount was accomplished and both groups did well with the new concepts. The results of the sessions are included in the report of Anis Tarabey, but in short, they were on target if not always immediately practical given financial constraints.

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<sup>2</sup> I have since ascertained that there is not even a mention of the National or International BPW’s directly in the Bylaws of either Aqaba or Amman BPW’s, but reference to political parties is understandable given that associations like the Jordan Dental Association actually take positions on the Palestinian uprising and sanctions against Iraq.

The Zarqa leader and group seemed more open to exploring new ideas, but no one should under-estimate the determination, contacts or canniness of the Aqaba leader.

### Day Three

On Sunday the consultants worked one-on-one in with the groups and closed with some comments about strategic planning in general and leadership. Before the closing, the Aqaba President actually said out loud that she wondered if perhaps a name change to “organization” might be in order! This followed the presentation of the Zarqa strategies and goals which included investigating the same changes as the Amman club. Anis asked for evaluations of both facilitators and AMIR which should be included – as they too were produced in Arabic – in his report.

## Strategic Planning for NFBPW

The results of a strategic planning session between the four BPWAs and the NFBPW, guided by a federation study commissioned by AMIR, resulted in a verbal statement of support for the NFBPW by three of the BPWA Presidents in attendance, plus a statement of support given to Consultant by Vice President of the BPW Amman, Reem Damen. The participants also brainstormed a vision, edited the NFBPW mission statement, and created eight Strategic Goals that would differentiate the work of NFBPW from its local member associations. The expansion of the NFBPW was not listed as one of these Strategic Goals but I would not be surprised if it was added at a later time, if possible, by the NFBPW President as it is certainly her personal goal.

There is nothing listed in the International BPW web pages in mission, goals or programming that indicates the need for successful Jordanian women's business associations to cut their ties to that organization in order for them to function as true business-oriented, member-driven, sustainable business associations. The need for this was driven home at the outset of the meeting in exactly those terms by the consultant. Only the nomenclature "club," (if not changed) with its social connotation *and* the strong history of personal animosity between the leaders of the NFBPW, which includes the founder of the BPW Amman, and the current President of the BPW Amman, indicate a need for a severing of that relationship. BPW Amman has already moved toward a name and registration change, which Zarqa and Aqaba are also considering. No one in the current leadership of each of the BPWAs that the consultant has met with has indicated a problem with the NFBPW approach so long as they feel they are getting *some* service for their investment. As AMIR, by setting up and hosting the NFBPW strategic planning meeting with all BPWA members this month, is assumed to have tacitly given approval to such an arrangement, the consultant believes it will be difficult for AMIR to defend - if necessary - an insistence that the BPWA's change their affiliations in order to be considered for future support or to be penalized by their reluctance to do so. AMIR's study was clear on both the benefits and the drawbacks of such a broad relationship. The penalizing history of the BPWA relationship could be alleviated through negotiation and the re-drafting of Bylaws, clear agreements on roles and responsibilities, and/or changes in leadership, *as recommended in the report*. These steps should be taken and the affiliations – current and future – left up to the involved parties without negative consequences.

The meeting was kicked off by a frank appraisal of the damage that has been done to the BPWA's at all levels by the in-fighting and leadership struggles of the past few years, building on the study's conclusion of the inherent friction observed in all federation relationships. The meeting's goal of putting the past behind and moving forward with a clear focus for the organization, with attendant strategies, goals and a funding discussion based on self-responsibility and accepted international association sustainability practices, was laid out and accepted. There was appreciation for the candor,

however, without the Amman President present, no vows of moving forward can be taken as gospel and the meeting's goal of strategic planning took precedence over remediation.

The local level attendees demonstrated that the process lessons of the Petra strategic planning meeting had not been lost on them and the meeting continued with co-facilitator Anis Tarabey at the helm, as differences between vision, mission, strategies and goals were pointed out by the locals to the NFBPW representatives. The Irbid President, present for the first time at a planning session, continued to argue for a focus on disadvantaged, women, but other members maintained a focus on business women while acknowledging that the associations in each community would need to determine their focus based on local circumstances. National leadership also acknowledged that conditions were much different now than they were at its founding 25 years ago. The result was the eight Strategic Goals for the NFBPW listed below:

1. Establish communication system with member associations.
2. Help women develop in business by working to make member BPW's strong.
3. Be nationally focused at legislative, media and outreach levels.
4. Utilize opportunities provided by the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, (IFBPW) and other international sources for improvement of BPW success.
5. Use education for improvement of success of (Jordanian) women in the economic sphere.
6. Expand networking opportunities for business women nationally.
7. Create and maintain a sustainability model at all levels of the (national) federation.
8. Practice dynamic review of internal (organizational) structures and policies to keep NFBPW best able to better serve its members.

Attainment of these Strategies was followed by a brief break-out on the possible objectives that would fall under each strategy, using nationally - focused programs and services derived from member BPWA surveys, the AMIR federation study and the NFBPW's own leadership identified goals. In order to include the presentation/discussion on possible funding sources, this is all that time would allow in the one-day session.

The 30 minutes focus on funding began with pointing out that the 5<sup>th</sup> best practice of federations listed in the federation study could rarely be adhered to entirely, and that was that federal and local levels would not compete for funding. It is certainly true in the case of this Jordanian women's federation that the national and Amman organizations will be competing for many of the same donor sources and fundraising targets, and will need to deal with that in addition to the already present sources of friction between the two. This will be the case so long as most of the power and money in the country resides in the capital and the BPW's want to maintain a federation.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Whether the Aqaba club makes any changes or not in name or affiliation, they stand to succeed by the amount of attention being given to the region through the new Aqaba Special Economic Zone and the President's position, relationships and good business sense. The Aqaba BPW has already done a feasibility study on a bakery they would like to open that would both employ women and fund the BPW-Aqaba for the long term. They are hoping this will be possible under the new Aqaba focused AID project, but also discussed was the possibility of taking out a loan if they choose to proceed with that plan.
- BPW-Zarqa has committed leadership and the determination to do whatever is needed to succeed so long as they can be true to the mission they believe in which is strongly geared to improving economic opportunities for women. Zarqa seems destined for more economic success with the clear granting of a state economic zone to the governorate, and the BPW learned much about how to take advantage of this from both the consultant and the BPW-Aqaba. They also will pursue being housed in their local chamber building before the Zarqa BPW loses its housing in the local NGO center.
- Consultant cautions AMIR about the message that will be sent if one AID project funds a BPWA with little change made while another BPWA is struggling to conform to business association standards but may receive nothing. Both Amman and Aqaba have problems with "Board culture" though the problems are different and each organization has what it feels is a good track record of results. If they are treated differently, the reasons should be made clear with each organization being asked to conform - or not - to the business association model or an explanation made that they are at different stages in that process.
- Consultant *does not believe* that the success of associations called BPWs is dependent on their severing their relationship with the BPW federation. The business goals of both the International and National level organizations are sound, and some of the legal and cultural realities they seek to change in this part of the world and others do *very much* affect a woman's chance of success in the economic world. These should still be business issues, not social ones like divorce and alimony cases which the BPW's have agreed are not appropriate. The motivation to civic action in their goals is not very different than the civic programs conducted by many US-based chambers of commerce, and is seen as a foundation to becoming active in legislative and political affairs in those business organizations. Only if the parent organization has a problem with the associations dropping the part of their name termed "club" and replacing it with a more suitable title for a business organization, *need* a severance from that body take place. There is nothing in the Bylaws of either the International or National organizations that says anything about where the associations are registered, which Aqaba and Zarqa still need to address.

- The Irbid club is in the worst position of all of the BPWA's with the fewest assets and weakest leadership and no plans to turn the situation around beyond requesting funds from anyone who will consider them. However, the President's disgust with the constraints of being under the Social Ministry is quite real and they seem to have no real loyalty to the federation beyond thanks for any help offered.
- It is this consultant's opinion that the conducting of the Diagnostics, planning sessions – including the NFBPW - and inclusion in other training opportunities of the BPWA's, has been taken by them as intrinsic approval of them by AMIR. This has led to the belief by all of the BPWA's, that there is no problem with their federation structure and only sustainability, member focus and business programming and nomenclature are needed to be changed to be in alignment with other Jordanian business associations. A meeting of all concerned parties is slated for June 4<sup>th</sup> and will hopefully bring these animosities to rest once and for all. It was made clear to *all* of the groups that they have *all* been hurt by the immature nature of their relationships.
- The NFBPW's existence will continue to be questioned, if only privately, so long as it remains incapable of creating a funding stream and the local associations of Amman and Aqaba go forward with their own growth and sustainability plans. These two organizations with their own strong leadership have no dependency on this level, nor apparently any desire to support it financially in order for it to grow in strength and influence. Being membership-based organizations with support in their individual communities for their achievements, the locals have much more of a chance for future success than the national unless it can obtain patronage at a national level as the spokesman for a "national strategy for business women" as it claims to have been asked for by potential donors and the government. Only with such investiture of power could I imagine they could even consider individual business memberships, (should IFBPW Bylaws allow such structure) or even corporate sponsorship. Numbers would have to grow considerably in the existing member associations – or establishing of new ones with attendant large numbers – for support to be attracted from most private funding sources.

Annex A: BPW Strategic and Program Planning Agenda**May 17-19, 2002  
Schedule**

<b>Time/Day</b>	<b>Friday, May 17, 2002</b>	<b>Saturday, May 18, 2002</b>	<b>Sunday, May 19, 2002</b>
9:00 – 10:30	Introduction  Role of Business Associations / Women's Association	Strategic Planning: Vision, Mission, Objectives	One-on-One Strategic Program Planning (Budgets, Etc.)
<i>10:30 – 10:45</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
10:45 – 13:00	Introduction to Strategic Planning Programs / Membership Development	Strategic Planning: Vision, Mission, Objectives (cont.)	One-on-One Strategic Program Planning (Budgets, Etc.)
<i>13:00 – 14:00</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
14:00-15:00	Membership Retention / Marketing / Non-Dues Income	Strategic Planning: Vision, Mission, Objectives (cont.)	
<i>15:00 – 15:15</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>	<i>Break</i>
15:15 – 16:00	Roles of Board of Director / Leadership	Programs Discussion	
19:00 – 20:30	Networking Event		

## Annex B: NFBPW Strategic and Program Planning Agenda

### NFBPW Strategic Planning Session

#### 9:00am Introductions, Schedule and Ground Rules

- What should be the vision for the NFBPW?
- Is the current mission adequate?
- Examine current projected strategies to 2004 Are there overlaps with locals? If so, ok? Missing goals?
- What activities should the NFBPW be engaged in? What do the member BPW's want from the organization? From the International that the National might broker?
- Are their goals, programs, activities that the National level should not be engaged in? Are there programs, activities that the local level should not be engaged in?
- Given that the National and Amman chapters are both located in Amman, what is an appropriate level of interaction? Support?
- How should the NFBPW program be financed?

## Annex C: Possible NFBPW Programs and Services

### POSSIBLE NFBPW PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

(as based on needs survey of the member BPW's of Jordan)

- National lobbying
- Coalition Building
- Education Programs with national and international experts brought to BPW members and the public at reduced cost
- International representation
- Research papers
- Legislative and legal briefings, debates, bulletins and panel discussions on national issues, regulations and laws of special interest to business women
- Writing of grant proposals and distribution of successful grants to member BPW's
- System-wide membership directory of collective BPW members and the national distribution of same
- Website with linkages to local BPW web sites and member business web sites
- Establishment of new chapters to add strength through numbers to lobbying efforts
- Conferences (Education, Advocacy, Awards)
- International trade missions organized with and through other BPW's
- National BPW newsletter
- Networking events for BPW members
- Market research reports and other white papers
- For NFBPW leadership to share personal association leadership experience
- Assistance in overcoming barriers like lack of office space, awareness campaigns

Other Ideas: (Also see AMIR Federation study)

- Business scholarships to young women
- Set up matching fund grant opportunities with national Jordanian businesses
- Graduate scholarships to established business women or to credential women business students
- Discounted services to BPW members nationally as numbers grow
- Help in connecting local BPW's to national IT centers
- Spread of "best ideas" to member BPW's through membership in Amman-based professional association management network
- Surveys of BPW member businesses to see where women stand nationally on controversial issues

NFBPW Goals:

- To enlighten Jordanian women on professional & personal rights
- To "oversee" local BPW's
- To provide economic, entrepreneurial and technical advice & support
- To provide information, training, financial aid and Advocacy/representation
- To spread BPW's
- To support young career women

## ANNEX D

### BPW International Mission and Goals

#### **BACKGROUND**

BPW International or as otherwise known as *The International Federation of Business and Professional Women* (may also be referred to as IFBPW or the Federation) with Affiliates in over 108 countries is the recognised voice of gainfully employed women in all professions and occupations. One of the world's most influential organisations, non-partisan and non-sectarian, BPW International promotes its objectives without distinction as to political beliefs, race, language or religion. The Federation works for equal opportunities and status for women in the economic, civil and political life in all countries.

#### **FORMATION**

BPW International was formed in Geneva, Switzerland in 1930, on the initiative of Dr. Lena Madesin Phillips of the United States who was elected as the first President and served until 1947. The founder member countries, besides the United States of America, were Austria, Canada, France, Great Britain and Italy. Over the years, BPW International has developed an immense network of business and professional women throughout the world and has become a major player on the international stage on matters relating to the achievement of equal status for women.

#### **EMPOWERMENT**

The major priority for BPW International has always been the empowerment of women so that they can obtain economic independence, take control of their lives and fully participate in the society in which they live, thus improving their status and the security and well-being of their children. Globally, BPW International speaks out and presents statements on the fundamental issues relating to the welfare and status of women.

#### **PROGRAMMES**

Programmes have always stressed employment, management, entrepreneurship and leadership; access to decision-making roles in society; equal opportunities for training; and equal access to jobs and to credit. Workshops, seminars, networking and mentoring programmes have featured in the Federation's training and outreach activities.

#### **UNITED NATIONS STATUS**

As a non-governmental organisation (NGO), BPW International has Consultative Status, Category 1 with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It also has consultative status and special relations with:

- the International Labour Office (ILO)
- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
- the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)
- the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- the United Nations Fund (UNICEF)
- the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

BPW International has permanent representatives at the United Nations and its agencies in New York, Geneva, Paris, Vienna, and Seoul. These representatives keep BPW International Affiliates informed of UN activities and represent their views during meetings, particularly on issues relating to women's status.

BPW International has played a major role in all four World Conferences for Women from 1975-1995. In addition, BPW International has sponsored, co-sponsored, and participated in regional meetings which have included training seminars, workshops, conferences, and trade fairs.

Without the existence of the United Nations as a universal forum, the status of women could not have advanced to the degree it has within the space of fifty years.

## **INFLUENCE**

BPW International has a significant impact in influencing legislative issues. Many affiliates have been very active on CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women) and other legislative matters. The Federation encourages its members to lobby their governments on various issues of importance on which BPW International has an established mandate. Significant impact has been achieved at national level through the synergistic forces of affiliates by their lobbying and other activities in their respective regions.